

State. We cannot delay any longer. Every week, every month we delay, means less likelihood that we will make the changes that were promised.

This body overwhelmingly adopted the Help America Vote Act which, as Senator MCCONNELL has said, will make it easier to vote and tougher to cheat. This is a commitment we made to the people of America that we would provide these reforms and we would fund them. If this money has to wait until the approval of these appropriations bills sometime in February and getting the money out in March or April, we are not going to get it done in time. They are not going to be able to implement these vitally important reforms in election.

I know many people want to get their voting machines improved. Frankly, I want to see the end of dogs and dead people voting. They are still trying that in St. Louis. There was a nice 180-count indictment issued by the prosecuting attorney in the city of St. Louis, the circuit attorney. That problem needs to stop and the only way we can get it to stop is by funding the Help America Vote Act.

There are many other good arguments, but I urge the leaders to come together to work on this matter. If we could do it by unanimous consent, that would be the best, but if we have to come back the second week in December, we have an obligation to the people of Missouri to do our job. I plead with the leadership to come to some agreement so we can finish these bills.

I yield the floor.

PASSAGE OF H.R. 1

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I rise to comment briefly about the legislation which we have just passed and also about the omnibus appropriations bill. I compliment all of those involved in this Medicare bill. It is a long time in coming. It will provide much needed relief to America's seniors on the high cost of prescription drugs. It will eliminate the cuts in Medicare which were supposed to take effect in 2004 and 2005. It will, in fact, give the doctors an increase of 1.5 percent.

There was also a mechanism for changing the wage index classification for metropolitan statistical areas, the MSAs, so that the Secretary will have discretion to make that correction.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, with respect to the omnibus appropriations bill, the Senator from Missouri is correct that we ought to complete it. He has pointed out the importance of having the increases for veterans. I would add to that the importance of increases in the appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, where I chair the subcommittee.

I would like to comment briefly on two points in the appropriations bill

for my subcommittee. One of them involves the issue of overtime pay. The Senate passed, by a decisive majority, 54 to 45, a prohibition on any expenditures to implement the regulation on overtime which would cut out overtime for many Americans who really need that compensation, especially in light of the fragility of the economy at the present time.

In the House of Representatives, the regulations stood by three votes. Then on a later vote in the House of Representatives, by 18 votes, the House directed the conferees to strike the regulation, not to fund it until September 30, 2004.

When the omnibus was in the final stages of preparation last week, it was apparent to me that any course of action would leave the regulation in effect. If Senator HARKIN and I had insisted on keeping in the Senate amendment striking funding for the regulation, then our appropriations bill was scheduled to be taken out of the omnibus and our three Departments, Health, Education, and Labor, would be funded on a continuing resolution and the regulation would remain in effect. If we agreed to remove the amendment striking the funding, then of course the regulation would go into effect. So either way, the regulation was going to go into effect. By having our bill included in the omnibus, we had \$4 billion more for vital programs in NIH, for Head Start, for education, Leave No Child Behind, and workers' safety. So in effect we did not have a Hobson's choice, we had no choice at all. Either way we went, the regulation would remain in effect. If we agreed to take it out so we would be included in the omnibus, then the prohibition against funding would fall. If we were taken out and made a part of the continuing resolution, then the regulation would stay in effect.

It is my hope, when this matter goes forward, the vote in the Senate will remain and the provision remains in the Senate bill to strike the funding for the regulation. So that battle is not over. We intend to continue to fight it right down to the wire, until the omnibus appropriations bill is adopted.

One other point, and I will be brief. I know my other colleagues are waiting to speak. One other point, and that involves the House language to prohibit funding for patents for human tissue. That provision in the appropriations bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State is going to cause enormous uncertainty. It is very expensive, and a very long process, to have a patent. There will be many people, who will be interested in proceeding with patents, who will not understand the ramifications of the language on human tissue.

I am against human cloning. I made that point emphatically clear in our conference, where I offered an amendment, a motion to strike the House language, which passed on the Senate side 18 to 8, but the House refused to

agree. So the language remained in the bill. But I believe the scientific community in America is going to march on the Congress to stop the meddling with scientific research with vague prohibitions which can only lead to grave difficulties and which impede medical science.

One concluding thought. I thank those on the other side of the aisle who, as I understand it, have removed the holds on all of the pending nominees. Just a word in support of Pennsylvania Attorney General Michael Fisher, who is up for confirmation for the Third Circuit. I have known Attorney General Fisher for the better part of three decades. He has an extraordinary record in the Pennsylvania Legislature and as the State attorney general and as candidate for Governor.

I ask unanimous consent that a full statement of his résumé be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of these remarks.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ATTORNEY GENERAL MIKE FISHER

Mike Fisher, the Attorney General of Pennsylvania since 1997, was nominated on May 1, 2003, by President George W. Bush to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, which covers Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the Virgin Islands. The nomination is subject to a majority confirmation by the United States Senate.

Currently serving his second four-year term, Attorney General Fisher is only the third elected Attorney General in State history. His top priorities have included protecting Pennsylvanians from crime, reducing the use of illegal drugs, stopping the tobacco industry from marketing to children, and expanding consumer protection services.

Attorney General Fisher personally argued major cases in State and Federal appellate courts. In March 1998, he successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court a precedent-setting case ensuring that paroled criminals meet the conditions of their release.

Attorney General Fisher has worked to improve the quality of justice in Pennsylvania. He is an active member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA), serving in its House of Delegates and on various committees. Working with the PBA, he has co-sponsored an innovative violence prevention program in Pennsylvania elementary schools called Project PEACE, which helps young people learn to resolve conflicts without violence. Fisher also encourages PBA participation by the attorneys in his office.

Before his election as Attorney General, Mike Fisher served for 22 years in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, serving six years in the State House and 16 years as a member of the State Senate. He was a member of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, the Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and the Majority Whip of the Senate. During his legislative career, he was a leader in criminal and civil justice reform and an architect of many major environmental laws.

Attorney General Fisher began his legal career in his hometown of Pittsburgh following his graduation from Georgetown University in 1966 and Georgetown University Law Center in 1969. As an Assistant District Attorney for Allegheny County, he handled nearly 1,000 cases, including 25 homicides. He